

Overdose Review Commission Releases Annual Report

**Recommendations include housing, trauma training,
expanding recovery resources in the criminal
justice system**

The Delaware Drug Overdose Fatality Review Commission (DOFRC) has released its second annual report to Governor John Carney and the General Assembly.

The 18-page report, released Tuesday, details five policy recommendations based on its review of a sample of 130 overdose fatalities that occurred in 2019.

*“The addiction epidemic hasn’t gone away,” said **Attorney General Jennings**. “Delaware’s public health officials are fighting two wars: one against COVID-19 and another against substance use disorder. Thousands of Delawareans in public health agencies, law enforcement, hospitals, nonprofits, and our neighborhoods have stepped up to fight the epidemic. This report’s findings show that they’re doing great work, but that they still need our help.”*

Notable findings from the report include:

- 38% of decedents in the sample were unhoused or had unstable housing. Decedents without stable housing were significantly likelier to have been previously incarcerated
- 4% of decedents in the sample had experienced one or more traumatic events—including 15% who witnessed an overdose—but only 8.5% of decedents had received counseling
- 40% of decedents had at least one prior non-fatal

overdose; some had as many as nine

*“Substance use disorder affects everyone: not only its victims, but their families and their entire communities,” said **DOFRC Chair Erin Booker**. “We need to bring everyone together – from health care providers and public officials to law enforcement and advocates – to confront this issue and reduce the harm that the epidemic has caused throughout our state. That’s exactly why DOFRC exists. Our findings provide new, empirically-based opportunities for action in the fight against the opioid epidemic. I’m grateful to, and proud of, all of my colleagues on the Commission for their work addressing this difficult but critical issue.”*

The report makes five key recommendations:

1. Provide safe and secure housing through the empirically-backed Housing First model for unhoused or unstably housed individuals.
2. Expand Continuing Education availability for Licensed Clinicians to increase knowledge of Trauma Intervention Services
3. Intervene for those whose contact with law enforcement does not result in arrest or incarceration; and initiate substance abuse treatment services immediately following incarceration for inmates awaiting sentencing
4. Establish a notification system within the Prescription Monitoring Program to ensure prescribers are aware of patient non-fatal overdose(s)
5. Improve outreach and follow-up with individuals who engaged in substance abuse related treatment

The full report is available [here](#).

The DOFRC was established to examine the facts and circumstances of deaths resulting from prescription opioid, fentanyl, and heroin overdoses and make evidence-based recommendations on to how to prevent future overdose deaths.

The Commission is staffed by the Department of Justice and is required to report its findings on at least an annual basis.